2: Schaden--77 E-4, 5 (1946-1954)1962 SM4 Guarani SM4

Chapter V

Individual and Family

1. Childhood and the formation of the personality

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157 The Guaraní child is characterized by a remarkable spirit of independence. To the extent that his physical development and mental experience allow, he participates in the life, the [858] activities, and the problems of the adults. It is understandable that such might prove to be true in epochs prior to accelerated acculturation, in which there was great cultural stability in the tempo and fixity of patterns, a state of affairs in which the conflict between the generations would be practically null. As the phenomenon persists, unaltered, through all the phases of the acculturative process, it reflects a fundamental or essential trait of the Guaraní culture that shows itself constant as long as the latter is able to exist. Such a characteristic is respect for the human personality and the notion that it develops independently and freely in each individual, without there being any possibility of interfering in any decisive manner in the process. As far as the psychic and moral development of the person is concerned, the Guaraní does not believe at all in the utility and efficacy of educational methods, aside from exceptional ones or by magical means. Treated like adults, Guaraní children are more frank and [855] less retiring than they are, when in contact with foreigners.

It happens that children, even those of a very young age, stay alone in the house all day long, when the father is hunting or goes "to look at the traps" in the forest, and the mother is [857] working on some distant clearing. The little ones spend as they please the money that they receive as alms on the occasion of the journeys on which they accompany their parents to São Paulo or some other city. This and many similar facts characterize the atmosphere in which the child develops, breeding in it a feeling of autonomy and independence /68/ which cannot but lead it to a behavior in many senses identical to that of its parents.

/70 cont./ This is the mentality to which Father Franz Müller, missionary of the Congregação do Verbo Divino /Congregation of the Divine Word/, who worked among the Mbüá and other Paraguayan Guaraní, also alludes to, bitterly complaining that these Indians hold all intellectual, moral, or religious education in contempt (2).

2. /From p. 84 of the original source./
Müller, 1919.

Quite different from this attitude is that of the Kayová, among whom individual religiousness certainly is not much less accentuated, but who also have a kind of "school," i.e., instruction given for months by the paí to one or more youngsters who are destined for /71/ sacred office. -- Courses for candidates for the priesthood also exist as well among the Ñandéva.

For these, the educational problem takes on a peculiar aspect in view of the belief in reincarnation, which does not exist in the other subgroups of the tribe. The extraordinary affection that the Ñandéva dedicates to offspring is maternal and paternal love reinforced by the idea that the children are loved beings who return from the other world. Curt Nimuendajú has already observed that the rebom is called "Tudjá," old one. At Araribá the ñanderú Sebastião refers to his son Vítor: "Capitão Emídio died. Then he went to heaven /Port. céu, "heaven, sky, firmament"/. He returned, gave the prayer to me and -- watch him there. It is Capitão Emídio." And so on, Bastião's oldest son is the reincarnation of his father-in-law; a daughter, that of his mother-in-law. No wonder that the Ñandéva always give their children a great deal of independence. And no wonder that Bastião's eldest son, though still an adolescent, behaves like an adult, that he discusses the same problems, that he is concerned in the same way about the relations between the Indians and the officials of the Serviço de Proteção aos Índios, and other matters of this nature. How is one to demand much submission and reserve from a child who a few years before was known to everybody as an adult, perhaps as an old religious chief or a powerful doctor-sorcerer? How is one to give any special importance to the educative aspect of puberal initiation if the child, as a rebom

2: Schaden--83 E-4,5 (1948-1954) 1962 SM4 Guarani SM4

/71 cont./

adult, has long since been participating in all the collective prayers and ceremonies? And, finally, how could there be soil for the development of a well-differentiated childish culture?

The number of the Guaraní child's toys pertaining to the old tribal culture is small. Among the Kayová and the Ñandéva of Dourados I observed a shuttlecock made with maize leaves, which the former called mangá and the latter mbopé. At Jacareí I saw children playing with a toy top of cuia /a clay cup/, with a caraguatá string; the only denomination they gave the object was trompo, which seems to indicate that they received it from their Paraguayan neighbors. The game of "marbles" or gude /not italicized in the original/, likewise played by the boys of that village, is known only by the name of bolita; since they had no marbles, the children used macaúba fruits (mbokadjá).

Generally, however, these manifestations of a culture specifically childish are minimal in view of the participation of the child in the cultural patterns of the adults. In the more acculturated groups, where the latter already play the guitar /Port. viclão/ and enjoy themselves with sertaneja /typical of the interior of the country/ or even carnival music, it happens that a father will buy for his six or /72/ seven-year-old son a cavaquinho /a small guitar-like instrument/, on which the latter will then try to play the tunes he is accustomed to hearing. On the other hand, the children learn the sung prayers early, not only by dint of constantly attending the religious ceremonies, and participating in them, but also because these prayers are often used as lullabies, as I have observed among the Nandéva of Itariri, where, as among the Mbüá, I also saw little children a few years old sing them alone.

The attitude toward education changes visibly with the advance of the acculturative process, which introduces a new ideal of culture and previously unknown social aspirations. Particularly the Ñandéva of the São Paulo coast sometimes showed a marked preoccupation with the problems of instruction, stemming from a manifest desire to appear more civilized. One